Respond to the Call for Prayer

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All praise is due to Allaah alone; may He send salutations and exalt the mention of the seal of all Prophets and Messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, his family and all his companions.

Prayer holds a high rank and great position in Islaam. It is as important as the head is to the human body; just like a body cannot continue to exist without a head, one's Islaam can not be established without prayer.

The fruits and virtues of prayer

- It was prescribed in the heavens the night the Prophet (ﷺ) ascended to the heavens, while the commands for the remaining acts of worship were revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) on earth. This indicates its great importance, sacredness and status.

- It is the only pillar which is repeated five times each day, and it is never waved except for a woman experiencing her menstrual period or post partum bleeding.

- It is the one of the most virtuous and most

beloved of deeds to Allaah as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"…know that the best of your deeds is the prayer, and only a true believer maintains the state of ablution."*** *(Ahmad)*

- It is the backbone of Islam, and brings pleasure to the eyes of pious. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"The most important of all matters is Islaam, its backbone is the prayer, and its highest level is Jihaad for the sake of Allaah."*** *(Ahmad)*

- It is a proof of one's Islaam, a sign of belief, and it preserves a person's blood from being shed. Allaah says what means ***"But if they repent [by rejecting Shirk (polytheism) and accept Islamic Monotheism], perform As-Salaat (Iqaamat-as-Salaat) and give Zakaat, then they are your brethren in religion."*** *(At-Tawbah: 11)*

- It is a sign of honesty and frees a person from hypocrisy. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"Whosoever prays forty days with the congregation, attending the initial (Allaahu Akbar) of the prayer will be free of two things: Hellfire and hypocrisy."*** *(Ahmad)*

- It is the best issue to be occupied with, the most profitable business, and the most likely amongst

all acts of worship to cause a person to become humble and submissive. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"Prayer is the best thing to be occupied with, so whoever is able to perform much of it then let him do so."*** *(Ahmad)*

- It is a command from Allaah, an advice of the Prophet (ﷺ), and a feature which distinguishes the people of Islam and Eeman. Allaah says what means, ***"Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawaat (the prayers)… and stand before Allaah with obedience."*** *(Al-Baqarah: 238)*

- It elevates the ranks and expiates sins, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"Tell me, if there were a river in front of one's house in which he would bath five times a day, would any dirt remain on him?*** They said: *"No dirt will remain on him."* He then said, ***"That is the example of the five daily obligatory prayers, for through them Allaah erases sins."*** *(Bukhaari & Muslim)*

- It secures one from the Hellfire, protects against danger, and makes a person win Paradise. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"The one who prays before sunrise (Fajr prayer) and before sunset (Asr prayer) will not enter the Hellfire."*** *(Muslim)*

- It is a sign for success and victory and an indication of being accepted. Allaah says what means, ***"Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their Salaat (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness,"*** *(Al-Mu'minoon: 1-2)* and also, ***"…and those who strictly guard their (five compulsory congregational) Salawaat (prayers) (at their fixed stated hours). These are indeed the inheritors. Who shall inherit the Firdaus (Paradise). They shall dwell therein forever."*** *(Al-Mu'minoon: 9-11)*

- It is the first thing for which the slave will be held accountable. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"The first thing for which the slave will be held accountable for on the day of Resurrection is his prayer; if it is good*** *(by performing it properly and on time),* ***then the rest of his deeds will be good, and if it is ruined*** *(by neglecting it),* ***then the rest of his deeds will be ruined."*** *(At-Tabaraani)*

- It is a provision for the way, a comfort for the soul and body, a light for the heart, purification for the soul and a sign for salvation. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"O Bilaal! Call the Iqaamah! Bring***

us comfort by it!" *(Ahmad & Abu Daawood)*

- It frustrates Satan and the disbelievers. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"When the son of Aadam recites a verse which recommends him to prostrate and he does, Satan starts crying and says, 'Woe to me, the son of Aadam followed what he was commanded and he will get Paradise as a reward, while I was commanded to prostrate and refused and will enter Hell."*** *(Muslim)*

- It is a form of expressing appreciation and gratitude, as well as being a treasure full of magnification of Allaah glorification and praise of Him. When the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked about the reason behind his excessive prayer, he (ﷺ) said, ***"Shouldn't I be a thankful slave?!"*** *(Bukhaari & Muslim)*

- It protects against following desires, evil sins and cures from sicknesses, as Allaah says what means, ***"Verily, as-Salaat (the prayer) prevents from al-Fahshaa' (i.e. great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse) and al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed)"*** *(Al-'Ankaboot: 45).* The Prophet

(ﷺ) said, ***"Pray the optional night prayer, for it is the way of righteous before you; it brings you close to your Lord, prevents you from committing sins, expiates your sins and cures you from sicknesses."*** *(Tirmithi)*

Those who have abandoned the Prayer

O you who have abandoned prayers! What is left of your Islaam after you have abandoned them?! Don't you know that it is the backbone of Islaam and an indication of your belief?!

O you who have abandoned prayers! All creatures prostrate to Allaah except for you, while Allaah says what means ***"See you not that whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, ad-Dawaabb [moving (living) creatures, beasts], and many of mankind prostrate themselves to Allah?! But there are many (men) on whom the punishment is justified."*** *(Al-Hajj: 18)* If you don't pray, then you will be among those on whom the punishment is justified.

O you who have abandoned prayers! Don't you

know that abandoning it is an act of disbelief, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"The pledge between us and them is (expressed by their performance of) the prayer; whosoever abandons it has disbelieved."*** *(Ahmad*

O you who have abandoned prayers! Don't you know that slackening in it is a form of hypocrisy?! Allaah says what means, ***"Verily, the hypocrites seek to deceive Allaah, but it is He Who deceives them. And when they stand up for the prayer, they stand with laziness and to be seen of men, and they do not remember Allaah but little."*** *(An-Nisaa': 142)* Do you not see that the hypocrites during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) would pray, although to be seen, while you don't pray at all?!

O you who have abandoned prayers! Don't you know that abandoning it causes heedlessness and hardness of the heart, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"Let the people stop abandoning the Friday prayer, or else Allah will surely seal their hearts, and they will become of the heedless."*** *(Muslim)*

O you who have abandoned prayers! Don't you know that this leads to the punishment in Hell, as Allaah says what means, ***" 'What has caused you to enter Hell?' They will say: 'We were not of those who used to offer the Salaat (prayers).' "*** *(Al-*

Muddaththir: 42-43)

O you who have abandoned prayers! Don't you know that abandoning it causes worry, disorder and a difficult life, Allaah says what means, ***"But whosoever turns away from My Reminder, verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection. He will say: 'O my Lord! Why have you raised me up blind, while I had sight (before).' (Allaah) will say: 'Like this Our Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) came unto you, but you disregarded them, and so this Day you will be neglected (in the Hell-fire, away from Allaah's Mercy).' "*** *(Taa Haa: 124-126)* What a pity and a waste! How is it that the years of your life are passing and your heart is veiled from worshipping Allaah; how can you depart this life and you did not taste the best of it?! Indeed the best of this life is worshipping Allaah, mentioning Him and expressing your gratitude to Him.

O you who have abandoned prayers! What remains to be important to you in your religion if you give no importance to your prayer? Don't you know that one who abandons prayer finds it easier to abandon other acts of worship?!

Repent, O heedless one, to Allaah , before death comes to you while you have abandoned the prayer.

O you who have slackened in your prayer!!

What are going to do after you learned about the great virtues of prayer?

What are going to do after knowing the abundant awards set for those who pray?

What are going to do after you learned about the punishment awaiting those who abandon it?

Are you going to continue slighting and neglecting your prayer?!

Will you still insist to sleep through your prayers or delay them after their prescribed times?!

Dear brother! Where is your ambition?! Where is your strong determination?! Where is your readiness for Paradise?! Where is your adherence to the prescribed timings for prayers?! Where is your early arrival for the Friday and congregational prayers?!

The ranks of people in relation to prayer

Ibn Al-Qayyim may Allaah have mercy upon him said, *"There are five ranks of people in relation to prayer,*

The First is he who transgresses against himself by neglecting parts of Wudoo', its timings, its limits and pillars. This person will be punished.

The Second is he who maintains its timings and conditions, but his mind is occupied during prayer, and he will be asked about this.

The Third is he who maintains its timings, conditions, and all its rights, but spends his efforts struggling against himself not to become busy thinking of something else. He is in a state of Jihaad and prayer. He will be forgiven.

The Fourth is he whose heart is fully consumed by the prayer, and his main concern is establishing it properly and perfectly. He is in a state of servitude to his Lord, and he will be rewarded.

The Fifth is he who does as the fourth, but in addition he sets his heart in the Hands of his Lord,

seeing Him through it, watchful of Him filled with love and magnification as if he is witnessing his Lord. His mind is concentrated on praying. The difference between this level and the others is like the distance between the heavens and the earth. This person is consumed with his Lord in his prayer, bringing him comfort to his eyes. This person is close to his Lord, and his eyes will be comforted in the Hereafter as well by being close to Him."

Dear brother! Which one of these five ranks do you fit in? Hold yourself accountable and weigh it according to your performance of prayer, for indeed the scale of the prayer does not err!

Magnifying the role of prayer

One can magnify the role of prayer in his life in many ways:

1. Perform it on time.
2. Perfect its conditions and compulsory acts.
3. Rush to perform it.
4. Feel sorrow if any portion was performed

improperly, like he who becomes saddened for not performing it with the congregation because he missed out on the twenty seven multiples of reward, or if he was not attentive and submissive during prayer which is its soul and essence; a prayer without submission is like a body without a soul.

An accepted prayer

Beloved brother, the following is some advice to help you preserve and guard your prayer, and perform it in a proper manner, which is more likely for it to be accepted:

- Properly perform *Wudoo'* because the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"Allaah made compulsory upon Himself to Admit into Paradise any Muslim who properly performs Wudoo', then prays two Rak'ah with attentiveness and submissiveness."*** *(Muslim)*

- Leave your house in the state of *Wudoo',* for the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"The one who leaves his house in a state of Wudoo' to perform an obligatory prayer will get the reward of***

pilgrimage.” *(Ahmad)*

- Be keen to perform it as soon as its time is due, for the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***“The best of deeds is performing prayer on its due time.”*** *(Bukhaari & Muslim)*

- Be keen to perform it with the congregation, for the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***“Prayer with the congregation is twenty seven multiples better than praying alone.”*** *(Bukhaari & Muslim)*

- Be keen to reach before the *Imaam* utters the initial *Allaahu Akbar,* for the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***“Whosoever prays forty days with the congregation, attending the initial (Allaahu Akbar) of the prayer, will be free of two things: Hellfire and hypocrisy.”*** *(Ahmad)*

- Be keen to walk to the masjid, for the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***“Give glad tidings to those who walk to the masjid in the dark of complete light on the Day of Resurrection.”*** *(Abu Daawood & Tirmithi).*

- Be attentive with your heart while performing prayer.

- Have your heart attached to the masjid and wait in the masjid for the next prayer as much as you can, for the Prophet (ﷺ) said when he mentioned the seven whom Allaah will protect under the shade of His throne, ***"A man whose heart is attached to the masjid."*** *(Bukhaari & Muslim)*

- Learn the rulings of prayer and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ).

- Perform the regular optional prayers at home, for the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"The best prayer is the one performed at home, except the obligatory prayer."*** *(At-Tabaraani)*

- Beware of staying up late at night, for it will cause you to miss the *Fajr* prayer.

- Beware of eating, drinking and laughing too much, because this makes performing prayer heavy on the heart.

- Set your alarm for *Fajr,* or get someone to call you to wake up for prayer.

- Ponder upon the verses read during the prayer.

- Read about the *Salaf* and their ambition and

keenness in guarding their prayers, for it will cause you to follow their example.

- Think about the Greatness of Allaah before commencing your prayer.

- Always say the recommended supplications and remembrance after prayers, and do not be in a hurry toleave the masjid before finishing them.

May Allah make us from those who carefully guard their prayer and are attentive and submissive in it, and the last of our supplications is that All Praise is due to Allah.